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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7803
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT 0036
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C O N F I D E N T I A L PRAGUE 000966

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EUR/NCE FOR ERIC FICHTE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/15/2016

TAGS: [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [PREL](#) [LE](#) [EZ](#)

SUBJECT: CZECHS CONSIDER TROOP CONTRIBUTION TO UNIFIL;
DECISION MAY COME WITHIN DAYS

REF: STATE 134133

Classified By: Political-Economic Counselor
Michael Dodman for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Poloff and Army Attache met with Czech MFA Director of the UN Department Jan Kara, and Czech MOD Deputy Director of the Defense Policy Department, NATO and EU Section, Lt. Col. Petr Cech, on August 16 to discuss the possibility of Czech troop contributions to UNIFIL. Kara said the Czechs are currently debating the question. In recent days, the local press reported that PM Jiri Paroubek supports contributing troops to UNIFIL, while FM Cyril Svoboda expressed concern that such a contribution could hamper existing Czech commitments in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Kosovo. Kara said FM Svoboda would likely support commitment to UNIFIL if the MOD can guarantee that other commitments will not be affected. The decision could be made within days.

¶2. (C) Cech said the MOD believes that promoting stability in Lebanon is in the interest of Czech security policy. Therefore, the MOD is carefully considering the question of contributing troops to UNIFIL. High-level meetings to debate the issue will take place today, August 16. The MOD's recommendation will be based on the following factors: (a) no reduction in other military commitments, (b) budgetary constraints, (c) the likelihood of a long-term commitment. In light of these factors, the MOD is considering a rotational commitment of a single company. Cech said the MOD would welcome further details of UNIFIL needs, and the troop mandate. The Czechs may make a commitment in line with these needs and their own niche capabilities, such as providing medics or engineers. They would appreciate logistical support, such as transportation assistance for the troops, from UN or allied forces.

¶3. (C) Comment. The Czechs have the will to support the UNIFIL mission, and are searching for the way to make a contribution without endangering existing high-priority engagements in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Kosovo. Post predicts the Czechs will make a contribution, but that it will necessarily be small and discreet.
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